

Testimony of  
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Before the  
Committee on Government Reform  
U.S. House of Representatives

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Good Morning, Chairman Davis and Members of the Committee. I am Tom Jacobus, the General Manager of Washington Aqueduct.

Thank you for inviting us to once again appear before this committee to discuss matters relating to the elevated concentrations of lead in the drinking water found in some homes in the District of Columbia. I am pleased to be able to be here to report the results we have achieved since the last time I testified before your committee on May 21, 2004.

In February 2004, we formed a Technical Expert Working Group, consisting of Region 3 of the Environmental Protection Agency and scientists from within the Environmental Protection Agency, the District of Columbia

Water and Sewer Authority and its consultants, Washington Aqueduct and its other wholesale customers Arlington County and the City of Falls Church and their consultants, along with the District of Columbia Department of Health and the Virginia Department of Health. This group studied the corrosion problem and then recommended a revised corrosion control strategy. The recommendation was to add orthophosphate to the water leaving the Washington Aqueduct's water treatment plants. On August 3, 2004, EPA Region 3 approved a new Optimal Corrosion Control Treatment plan, and on August 23, 2004 treatment began in the entire system.

So far, all aspects of the change in the treatment chemistry have worked as expected at the treatment plants. The cost of the equipment necessary to make this treatment change was approximately \$820,000.

In addition to new process equipment installed at the two water treatment plants, Washington Aqueduct, in consultation with the Technical Expert Working Group, designed and constructed a set of pipe loops that will be used over the next year to evaluate the effectiveness of and possible improvements to the current corrosion control treatment. We used lead pipe obtained from the lead service line replacement project in the District of Columbia for the construction of our pipe loops. There are seven individual pipe loop racks running simultaneously, each with different water chemistry.

Daily readings of water chemistry and residual lead concentrations are taken. This will allow us to further optimize treatment.

This system will allow us to replicate what is actually happening as water flows through a pipe as it would in a residence. It has been constructed in such a way that pieces of lead pipe will be periodically removed for analysis to confirm the efficacy of the corrosion inhibitor.

We told the public that it would likely be a year after the corrosion inhibitor was applied to the system as a whole before it was having the desired effect and that the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority system would regain compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule. The new corrosion control chemistry has been operating for seven months, and it does appear that the treatment is positively affecting lead in the distribution system though compliance with the Lead and Copper rule has not yet been achieved. I will defer to the general manager of the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority to report on those specifics.

Our Virginia customers in Arlington County and in the City of Falls Church service area were never out of compliance with the Lead and Copper Rule, and in the round of compliance sampling between July and December 2004, they remained in compliance.

The coordination and cooperation among Washington Aqueduct, its customers and EPA Region 3 throughout this period of re-optimizing the corrosion control chemistry have been excellent. Senior water utility managers at Washington Aqueduct, the District of Columbia Water and Sewer Authority, Arlington County, and the City of Falls Church are directly involved in reviewing and discussing water quality data..

We have acquired services from major consulting firms with outstanding expertise in water treatment to help us evaluate a range of alternatives and improvements to our current processes. These steps will be taken via consultation with our wholesale customer technical committee, the EPA, and local and state regulatory agencies.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here this morning. I look forward to answering your questions.